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The Fall of Czarisms

Anna Mahé

July 6th 1905

In his palace, hearing the news which reach him each day, the czar shivers in fear. Every hour brings its revolt, quite often childish, sometimes terrible... And from every corner of the vast empire hatreds arise, angers flare up.

Petersburg, Lodz, Warsaw, Kronstadt, Loben, Odessa, Riga, Kiel, Nijni-Novgord, Kischineff, Hapsal, etc., etc., the former doleful resignation is shaken; a wind of terror is blowing, disturbing the emperor, the nobility and the state employees in their blissful digestion.

Fatalistic peasants, workers made obedient by the knout have at last some quivers of anger. They are to be sent to Mandchuria. Thus, since they're going to die anyway, they might as well get killed by shaking the tyranny which crushes them in gestures of madness.

Revolts, up until now, have been rather naive. A credulous people, grown children, walked with their hands up in supplication to get massacred willingly. An unconscious people who understood revolt in the same way as the old Tolstoy, an idiotic people of martyrs, who had so often bent their backs under the blows of the nagaikas that the only desire they can have is to get killed...

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And they were killed, again and again... Corpses piled up, in Petersburg, Warsaw, Odessa, everywhere... The cosaques worked hard to restore calm for the "little father gone mad" with terror.

But after Platonicist and sterile insurrections, the rebels learned no longer to be martyrs. Everywhere effective revolts are flaring up.

Something even more terrible, o emperor of all Russias, your soldiers, your officers even, are leaving you, and join the rebels. And you shiver in your apartments where fear is keeping you prisoner, fear that your courtesans themselves kill, with you and your offspring, what you symbolise.

The crew of the Kniaz-Potemkin rebelled and you do not dare to go after them with the crews of the other warships. Their example has been followed: despite the banal ending to this epic tale — are the news accurate? — the fight is not over; it is only beginning...

Of course we don't believe that people over there will only take reasoned and reasonable action. The inferior mentality of the Russian sheep does not allow us to believe that they will get rid of the idea of Czarism when they throw down the Czar. Their brains are way too used to obedience for them to be able to act as free men. Aren't the revolutionary committees making proclamations demanding the respect of private property under fear of death. And the clergy and the army which are taking side with the rebels are elements of atrophy in the work started amid so much blood, so many tears.

Whatever! That the result does not answer our desires, that the Russian revolution remain unfinished, it will still be a step forward.

It will surely produce, without any doubt, an elite of men who won't be satisfied by the acquired result, who will want to venture further, who will want to see the Russian people free not only of this Czarism, but of all Czarisms.

We can deplore that this task comes at such a price; but we can be but happy that it is being done.